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ABSTRACT

This document is a report on Washington State's Running Start program, which allows eleventh- and twelfth-grade high school students to take college courses for free at any of the 34 state community and technical colleges or at Washington State, Eastern Washington, or Western Washington universities. The program, which was started in 1990, is designed to reduce the amount of time students have to spend in college; consequently, the costs of attending college will also be diminished. The report shows that over $14.1 million dollars in tuition and fees were saved by students and their families in 2000-01. The program also saved taxpayers more than $28 million during the same time period. A total of 13,669 students participated in the program in 2000-01. Survey results show that: (1) 38% of Running Start participants worked part-time; (2) 58% were female; (3) 16% were students of color; and (4) 21% enrolled in vocational courses. In addition, most students who started at a community college felt well prepared for college-level coursework after transferring to a four-year institution. A University of Washington study on Running Start participants showed an average grade point average of 3.09 from Running Start students who transferred from a community college. (MKF)

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# RUNNING START

2000-01
Annual Progress Report
State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

October 2001

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# RUNNING START

## ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
## 2000-01

Running Start is a program that allows eleventh and twelfth grade students to take college courses for free at Washington's 34 community and technical colleges and Washington State, Eastern Washington, and Western Washington universities.

- Running Start reduces the amount of time students spend in school and reduces college costs for students and their families. In 2000-01, students and their parents saved $14.6 million in tuition.
- The program saved taxpayers $28.8 million since students take high school and college courses simultaneously.
- Running Start students perform well while they are in the program and after they transfer to the universities. In 1999-2000 Running Start students earned an average grade point of 3.09 after transferring to the University of Washington.

The 1990 Legislature created Running Start as a part of the "Learning by Choice" law, which was designed to expand educational options for high school students. To initiate the program in 1990, the Legislature authorized a two-year pilot program. Five community colleges were selected to participate during 1990-92 (Everett, Pierce, Skagit Valley, South Puget Sound, and Walla Walla community colleges). The pilot program involved 358 students from 37 high schools. The program began statewide in 1992-93, when about 3,350 students enrolled at the community and technical colleges. The 1994 Legislature expanded the program to include three state universities to provide Running Start program access to communities where no two-year colleges were available to directly serve students.

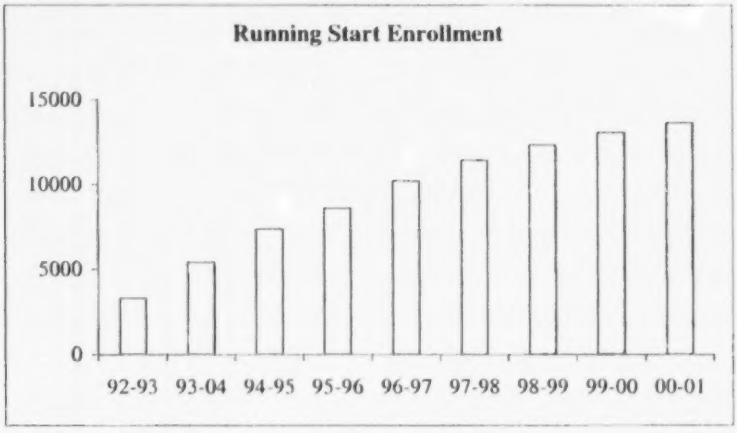
### Running Start Creates Options for Students

Running Start creates an alternative way for students to transition to college. Running Start and other dual-credit programs provide post-secondary schooling for students whose options may otherwise be limited. For high school students, Running Start is one of the most readily available college-level learning opportunities in the state.

Some high schools consider the college classes that are available to their students through Running Start to be part of the high school curriculum. Running Start and other dual-enrollment programs have made inroads on integrating the two systems. This integration allows students to more easily navigate the education system.

## Running Start Continues to Thrive

In 2000-01, Running Start completed its eleventh year as a successful and popular program for eligible high school juniors and seniors. Enrollment totaled 13,669 individual students, (equal to 8,189 full-time students), an increase of about three percent over the previous year when 13,092 students (7,767 FTE) participated. This is about equal to the overall growth in eleventh and twelfth graders. Previously the program had been growing faster than the growth in the high school population.




The state's high schools continue to provide excellent preparation for students who enter the Running Start program. A University of Washington's 1999-2000 study concluded that the overwhelming majority of students felt that they were well prepared for Running Start. A remarkable 90 percent either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they felt academically prepared for the classes they took at the community college.

## Benefits for Students, Families and State Budgets are Evident

*Students and Their Families*

Running Start presents a challenging option for qualified students who may perform better in a college setting than in a traditional high school. Students continue to report that taking classes with regular college students and adults offers a new and demanding dimension to learning. Junior and senior students, as defined by the high school and who are qualified for admission as determined by the higher education institutions, may participate in Running Start free of tuition. However, they must provide their own transportation, books, and supplies. By allowing students to obtain high school and college credit simultaneously, Running Start reduces the amount of time students spend in school and reduces college costs for students and their families. In some cases, the dual-credit nature of the program allows students to complete four years of education while only attending two years. This saves money for the state and the students or their parents.

Flexibility in scheduling allows Running Start students to meet other commitments for education, jobs, or family responsibilities. In fall 2000, 38 percent of the students worked part time and one percent worked full time.

*Budget*
For the 1999-2000 academic year, colleges were reimbursed at statewide uniform rates by the K-12 districts whose students participated in Running Start. Colleges received a statewide standard rate of approximately $83 per credit for academic programs, and $99 per credit for vocational programs. K-12 districts retain seven percent of the state funds for counseling and overhead.

When students earn credit for high school and college simultaneously, the state pays to support this education only once.

- With 8,189 FTE students in 2000-01, Running Start saved Washington taxpayers $28.8 million.
- Students and their parents also save because Running Start classes are offered tuition-free. In the last academic year, this resulted in a savings of about $14.6 million in tuition.
- The total amount saved by taxpayers, parents and students in 2000-01 is estimated at $43.4 million.

**Characteristics of Running Start Students -- Fall 2000**

Running Start students continue to perform well in two-year colleges and after transferring to universities. The grade point average for all Running Start students in two-year institutions is comparable to similar two-year college students. In 1999-2000, after transfer to the University of Washington, students continued with solid performance, averaging a GPA of 3.09.

The demographics of Running Start students in fall 2000, as a group, were very similar to those of previous years.

- 58 percent of the students were female.
- Over 16 percent were students of color.
- The average credit load taken by the students was 11-12 credits per quarter. 74 percent took 10 or more credits during fall 2000. Many students took one five-credit course per quarter at college with the balance of classes taken in high school.
- 2 percent were students with disabilities.
- 38 percent of the students worked part time; 1 percent worked full time.
- Almost 80 percent of the students were enrolled in academic courses (primarily courses in social science, English, speech and humanities).
- 21percent enrolled in vocational courses.

**Research Findings**

Western Washington University's recent study about how Running Start students transition into the university showed:

- Study participants reported feeling well prepared academically for Western. Students found community college a good bridge to the four-year scene. As one student said, "Community college was very, very hard and it definitely prepared me

academically." Having already learned to navigate the culture of one college system, they felt well prepared to tackle another.

- All students said that their exposure to the broad range of courses at the community college had helped them choose their major field of study at Western.

A national study of dual- redit programs released this year by the Pew Charitable Foundation lists a number of benefits of such programs including savings in both costs and time, efficiency of learning (reduced repetition between grades 11-14), enhanced admission and retention rates in college, improved transitions from high school to college, allowing students to "test the waters" of college learning, improving students' access to college and providing professional development for faculty in high schools and colleges. This study found that:

- By creating alternatives to traditional high-school-to-college transition, dual credit programs provide additional points of entry into post-secondary schooling for students whose options would otherwise be much more limited.
- Dual-credit programs can blur the line between high school and college by integrating the two systems and thereby create a continuum of learning from high school to college.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy released a study in 2001 that indicated:

- Running Start is the most readily available college-learning option for high school students.
- About half of the high schools report increases in enrollment and offerings of other college-learning opportunities in the last three years. High schools are trying to encourage students to stay on the high school campus by creating learning options to compete with Running Start.

**Issues**

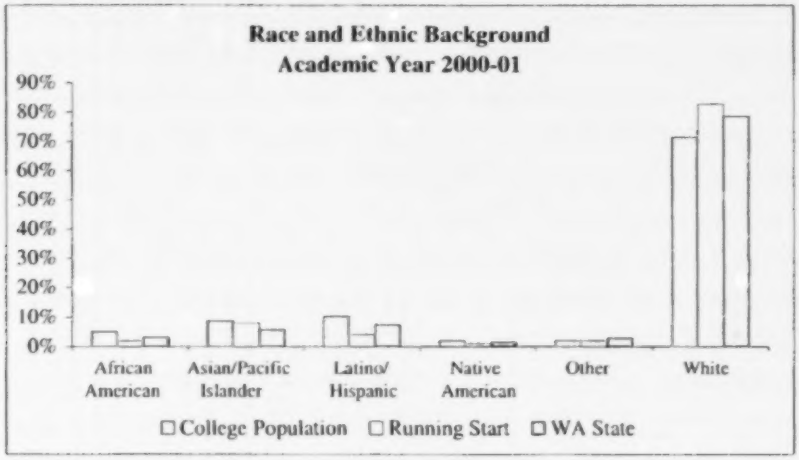
*Admission Policies*

High school principals have expressed concern about whether the Running Start admission criteria are consistent and rigorous enough. In response to this concern, the community and technical college presidents have commissioned a work group to look into the issue. The work group is comparing entrance requirements at each college in the state. While there are variations from college to college, the admission process typically requires students to successfully complete a standardized reading, writing, and/or math skills tests in order to enroll. The work group will analyze which classes students are able to take as a result of passing each section of these standardized tests. The work group is also examining the colleges' academic progress policies to ensure that an early intervention system is in place for students who are not doing well academically. A report will be available in December 2001.

*Diversity*

While a primary intent of the Running Start program is to increase access to college learning opportunities, current enrollment statistics indicate that African American, Native American, and Hispanic students are underrepresented among Running Start students. While the Running Start population mirrors the typical college population in Washington State, the colleges continue to

work toward ensuring that Running Start is a program that brings more students of color into higher education.




*Advising*

Research conducted by Western Washington University and the University of Washington indicate that Running Start students perceive a need for more and better advising both at the colleges and the high schools. Students report that it is hard to get specific and consistent answers to questions. To address this issue, a handbook for Running Start advisors and counselors is under development and will be available in early 2002.

*Certificate of Mastery*

There is much discussion about the connection between the Certificate of Mastery and Running Start. Some propose that the Certificate of Mastery, which can be earned by passing the tenth grade test (WASL), should be a pre-requisite for participation in Running Start. Others are concerned that such a requirement would limit participation rather than broadening the range of choices for high school students. In order to study this issue in more depth, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges are currently investigating the relationship between the standardized assessment tools used for admission by the colleges and the WASL assessment.

**Summary**

Serving 13,669 students in 2001, Running Start continues to be an excellent program option for qualified juniors and seniors. Students and their parents strongly support the program because it expands their educational choices while reducing the time and expense of completing their education. This year alone, students and their parents saved $14.6 million in tuition. Washington state taxpayers benefited by saving $28.8 million in state support because of the dual-credit awarded to students. Despite the program's significant success, increasing student diversity can further strengthen Running Start. On-going work with the high schools will ensure that Running Start continues to help students achieve high standards.

## RUNNING START ENROLLMENTS
### Academic Year 2000-01

| College | Headcount | FTEs |
|---|---|---|
| Bates | 99 | 124 |
| Bellevue | 663 | 407 |
| Bellingham | 91 | 58 |
| Big Bend | 157 | 106 |
| Cascadia | 262 | 136 |
| Centralia | 289 | 192 |
| Clark | 734 | 367 |
| Clover Park | 78 | 68 |
| Columbia Basin | 453 | 314 |
| Edmonds | 519 | 298 |
| Everett | 581 | 394 |
| Grays Harbor | 144 | 72 |
| Green River | 803 | 503 |
| Highline | 801 | 469 |
| Lake Washington | 32 | 8 |
| Lower Columbia | 313 | 213 |
| Olympic | 514 | 344 |
| Peninsula | 415 | 287 |
| Pierce District | 663 | 387 |
| Renton | 68 | 64 |
| Seattle Central | 504 | 267 |
| Seattle North | 292 | 154 |
| Seattle South | 274 | 148 |
| Seattle Voc Institute | 0 | 0 |
| Shoreline | 336 | 189 |
| Skagit Valley | 744 | 375 |
| South Puget Sound | 623 | 329 |
| Spokane | 337 | 227 |
| Spokane Falls | 582 | 360 |
| Tacoma | 568 | 348 |
| Walla Walla | 250 | 116 |
| Wenatchee Valley | 322 | 213 |
| Whatcom | 742 | 399 |
| Yakima Valley | 416 | 251 |
| **TOTAL** | 13,669 | 8,189 |

Source: SBCTC Data Warehouse
Statewide unduplicated total enrollment was 13,442.
A few Running Start students took courses at more than one college.

**University of Washington**
**Running Start Students' Transfer Performance**
**Data for Students Entering Fall 2000**

| | Number of Students | Percent of Total |
|---|---|---|
| **Total** | 750 | |
| **Gender** | | |
| Male | 348 | 46% |
| Female | 402 | 54% |
| **Entering College Class** | | |
| Freshman | 658 | 88% |
| Sophomore | 42 | 6% |
| Junior | 50 | 7% |
| **Ethnic Distribution** | | |
| African-American | 11 | 2% |
| Asian-American | 180 | 24% |
| Hispanic | 76 | 10% |
| Native American | 7 | 1% |
| White | 432 | 58% |
| Other | 94 | 13% |
| **Entering with AA Degree** | 68 | 9% |

| | Mean | Range |
|---|---|---|
| **High School GPA** | 3.65 | 2.70 - 4.00 |
| **SAT Verbal** | 582 | 260 - 800 |
| **SAT Math** | 598 | 340 - 800 |
| **SAT Total** | 1180 | 690 - 1570 |
| **ACT Score** | 25 | 16 - 34 |
| **Entering Transfer Credits** | 45 | 3 - 90 |

## University of Washington
## Running Start Students' Transfer Performance
## Data for Students Entering Fall 2000

### Largest Feeder High Schools

| | | | Number of Students |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Roosevelt | | 28 |
| 2. | Mountlake Terrace | | 16 |
| 3. | Kamiak | (tie) | 15 |
| | Mountain View | (tie) | 15 |
| 5. | Cascade | (tie) | 11 |
| | Shorewood | (tie) | 11 |
| 7. | Eastlake | (tie) | 10 |
| | Ingraham | (tie) | 10 |

### Largest Feeder Community Colleges

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Bellevue | 58 |
| 2. | Edmonds | 49 |
| 3. | Everett | 43 |
| 4. | Green River | 37 |
| 5. | Clark | 36 |
| 6. | North Seattle | 35 |

### UW Performance

| | Autumn 2000 | Winter 2001 | Spring 2001 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **GPA** | | | |
| Running Start | 3.06 | 3.07 | 3.12 |
| Freshman | 3.07 | 3.07 | 3.09 |
| Community College | 3.13 | 3.14 | 3.18 |
| **Credits Earned** | | | |
| Running Start | 13.9 | 13.4 | 12.9 |
| Freshman | 14.4 | 13.9 | 13.5 |
| Community College | 11.7 | 12.4 | 12.3 |
| **Continuation Rate** | | | |
| Running Start | Not Yet Available | | |

Source: Compiled by Jim Rawlins, University of Washington

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